

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FAILURE OF MALARIA ERADICATION PROGRAM IN INDIA

REF: NEW DELHI 6494

1. THE INDIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING STATED AFTER THEIR ANNUAL MEETING IN JUNE THAT THE NATIONAL MALARIA ERADICATION PROGRAM HAD BEEN A FAILURE IN INDIA. THIS STATEMENT FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF WHO, THAT THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE MALARIA HAS BEEN A FAILURE,

AND THAT THE DISEASE COULD BECOME EVEN MORE OF A SCOURGE IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID THAT UNLESS THE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS TAKE IMMEDIATE AND FIRM ACTION, MALARIA COULD RETURN TO AREAS OF THE WORLD WHERE IT HAD BEEN WIPED OUT.

2. IN INDIA, PRIOR TO THE INAUGURATION OF NATIONAL MALARIA ERADICATION PROGRAM IN 1952, THERE WERE OVER 75 MILLION CASES IN THE COUNTRY OR ABOUT 200,000 FOR EVERY MILLION POPULATION. IN 1970, THERE WERE ABOUT 500,000 CASES OR ABOUT 1300 FOR EVERY MILLION POPULATION. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT IN 1975 THERE WILL AGAIN BE BETWEEN FOUR OR FIVE MILLION CASES OF MALARIA IN INDIA. IN ORDER TO CURB THIS INCREASE
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THE CENTRAL HEALTH COUNCIL HAS MADE A DECISION TO BEGIN A

PROGRAM OF "SELECTIVE CONTAINMENT STRATEGY" FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE MALARIA CONTROL WITH ITS ERADICATION AS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE.

3. THE COUNCIL OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE CAMPAIGN'S FAILURE IN INDIA WAS PRIMARILY DUE TO LACK OF SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF INSECTICIDES OF THE TYPE NEEDED. THEY PLACED EMPHASIS ON THE TYPE OF INSECTICIDES SINCE THE ANOPHELES (MALARIA-TRANSMITTING MOSQUITO) HAD DEVELOPED RESISTANCE TO DDT AND OTHER INSECTICIDES. SINCE SOME OF THE ORGANOAMIDE COMPOUNDS, LIKE MALATHION, THAT WERE NOW NEEDED TO COMBAT THIS SPECIES WERE ONLY FORMULATED IN THIS COUNTRY, THE BASIC INGREDIENTS HAD TO BE IMPORTED. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT SINCE MALATHION WAS SIXTEEN TIMES COSTLIER THAN DDT, FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROBLEMS WERE A MAIN FACTOR. THE COUNTRY NEEDED 7,000 TONS OF IMPORTED INSECTICIDES TO FIGHT MALARIA ANNUALLY. SO FAR THIS YEAR, ONLY 500 TONS HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE.

4. ANOTHER PROBLEM RELATED TO THE CAMPAIGN'S FAILURE, WAS THE SLASH IN THE CURRENT BUDGET FOR MALARIA CONTROL FROM RS. 46 CRORES (RS. 460 MILLION) THAT HAD BEEN REQUESTED, TO ONLY RS. 26 CRORES (RS. 260 MILLION) THAT HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

5. THE MOVEMENT OF POPULATION WAS SAID TO BE ANOTHER MAJOR CAUSE FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF THE DISEASE AND IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT IRRIGATION PROJECTS WERE OFTEN THE STARTING POINTS FOR ITS SPREAD. THE COUNCIL CONCLUDED THAT UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT TOOK QUICK REMEDIAL STEPS IN ACCORD WITH THEIR RECOMMENDATION OF SELECTED CONTAINMENT, AND AT LEAST DOUBLED THE FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR MALARIA CONTROL, THE DISEASE WOULD CERTAINLY INCREASE TO THE LEVEL OF THE PRE-1952 DAYS IN A VERY FEW YEARS.

6. COMMENT: THERE WAS NO MENTION BY THE COUNCIL OF RESEARCH ON MALARIA CONTROL SUCH AS THE WORK DONE IN THE WHO MOSQUITO GENETIC PROJECT. END COMMENT. SAXBE

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